MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY
OF NEWFOUNDLAND

MORIAL UNIVERSITY
NEWFOUNDLAND

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WITH A PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE PRESENT
STATE OF RELIGIOUS TOLERATION IN
THE ISLAND.

BY REV. JAMES CABINE,
[illegible] Congregational Church, St. John.

BOSTON:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR;
AND SOLD BY SAMUEL T. ARMSTRONG, BOSTON, AND BY JOHN
[illegible], ST. JOHNS, NEWFOUNDLAND.
[illegible], Printer.
[illegible]
[illegible] Nassau.

Chu
Oct. 27, 1909

A VIEW, &c.

THAT which gives importance to any country is population: any tract of land containing a considerable number of the human race is an object worthy the attention of all and of every one who has the welfare of his common nature at heart. This is what gives a character and an importance to NEWFOUNDLAND in the eye of all who have had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with its history and experience. It is under an impression of duty that the writer of these pages sits down to collect a few documents, and so to lay them before the public that the attention of the wise and the good may be directed towards a class of their fellow creatures, which has hitherto shared comparatively very little in the sympathies and kind assistance manifested in the public spirit which have characterized surrounding nations.

Newfoundland for many years has contained a settled and increasing population; although many of the merchants and some of the fishermen only visit the island and stay the season, yet the far greater part of the people

[illegible]
a [illegible]
North [illegible]
fisherman, [illegible]
nominated [illegible]
years, along the [illegible]
the establishment of [illegible]
capital. This town is the [illegible]
sides the Governor, who is [illegible]
and with him, there are [illegible]
bench of magistrates, a Surrogate, [illegible]
with officers of justice and law. [illegible]
is *not colonized*, nor the capital town [illegible]
island is *without local legislation*, than which [illegible]
any thing can be more prejudicial to a [illegible]
consisting of from 60 to 80,000 souls: this is felt in [illegible]
Johns, more than in any part of the country, from [illegible]
great increase of inhabitants, which before the [illegible]
fires, amounted to upwards of 10,000.

For the religious instruction of this people, [illegible]
vision has been made for some years; a place [illegible]
worship was built by the Episcopalians of the [illegible]
of England; for the service of which the *Society* [illegible]
propagating the Gospel in foreign parts, furnished [illegible]
clergyman, with the stipend of two hundred [illegible]
a year, which has been continued to the present [illegible]
This Episcopal *Society for propagating the Gospel*, [illegible]
during a series of years, supported with a [illegible]
three or four other clergymen in several of the [illegible]
one at Harbor Grace, one at Trinity, and one, for [illegible]
time, at Burin, and one lately established at Twillingate

[illegible]

...0 souls: this is felt in St. ... of the country, from the ... which before the *dreadful* ... 10,000.

...on of this people, pro... some years; a place of ...iscopalians of the church ...of which the *Society for* ...oreign *parts*, furnished a ... of two hundred pounds ...ued to the present time. ...*pagating the Gospel*, has ...rted with a like salary, ... several of the Out Ports, ... Trinity, and one, for a ...established at Twillingate.

[illegible] ... for the Christian ministry? ... [illegible] ... by their clerical superiors. Under these circumstances, it may naturally be expected, that religion in Newfoundland is not very prosperous, at least, in the episcopacy.

The contiguity of Newfoundland to the Irish shore, and the settlement of some merchants and planters from that country, have contributed in no small degree to attract great numbers of the lower order of that people, who, of late years, have come over by ship loads, and have dispersed themselves almost all over the settled parts of the island. Among these, it is to be feared, that often the most abandoned characters among the Irish, have found an asylum in Newfoundland. The native character of the Irish nation is well known; they are a people, brave, courteous, and enduring; but when we see the contrary vices, they may be ascribed to two causes, a *bad government* and *a worse religion*.

With [illegible]
antry have [illegible]
island, and [illegible]
erica. St. Johns in [illegible]
erally land; and hogs, [illegible]
children, are so [illegible]
with peril, vice, filth and misery. [illegible]
the trade was more regular, and [illegible]
laborious Hibernians earned good [illegible]
their plantations wear the appearance of prosperity [illegible]
brought out from their native country, [illegible]
priests, who erected chapels in several places, and [illegible]
length established a bishop's see at St. Johns, where
there is a very large mass-house served by several of the
priesthood. Popery thus established and [illegible]
has contributed in no small measure to fill the country
with vice, and St. Johns, in particular, is thereby be-
come a sink of iniquity. The priests have contrived so
to wriggle themselves into the favor of government,
that the magistracy have almost given over to them the
legislation of their flocks: hence the outrages, minde-
meanors, and thefts, committed by these lawless people,
are seldom brought before the eye of the public. The
priests receive the confession, and sometimes the stolen
property, or part of it; which stolen property, in any
measure the priest pleases, is returned to the rightful
owner, but with such wily art and solemn reservation,
that the thief and villain is screened from justice, and
piously forgiven his sin by this Father Confessor and
Holy Pastor. But what crowns this scene of fraud and
violence, is the folly of the merchants and tradesmen

[illegible] Irish [illegible], many of whom are respectable, and well meaning men; but that this mistaken and vitiating policy should have been adopted by others, is surprising. What sort of morality can be expected in a country, where the priests are habitually administering the ordinances of forgiveness and of comfort to men, whom the officiators know to be thieves, adulterers, liars, swearers, and the priests know what besides. The moral state of this class of people, will be further developed in the view we shall take of other branches of the community, in some subsequent detail.

About the year 1770, some pious soldiers, and a few other individuals, were awakened to a sense of the miserable condition of the town; they discovered their concern for the spiritual welfare of their neighbors, by calling on them frequently, and especially on the Lord's day, to meet with them for the purposes of serious conversation, reading the scriptures, and prayer. These measures, some irreligious people affected to despise, and others thought it worth their while to oppose and

[illegible]

[illegible] ble, but also from the government. A [illegible] was so lost to the duty of his high station, as to shut up their meeting-house, for which he was [illegible] at home, and very narrowly escaped a prosecution in the court of King's bench, at the suit of a committee of protestant dissenters in London, associated for the protection and defence of religious liberty. The persecution coming to this crisis, had a good result; for both the government and the people of St. Johns, were thereby taught, that the British constitution afforded ample protection to all his Majesty's subjects, of peaceable deportment, though they did not conform to the church of England or of Rome. It is to be regretted, that this persecuting spirit has appeared, notwithstanding, on various occasions at different times since; and this persecuting spirit has generally been preserved and displayed most by the episcopacy.

Some few years since, [illegible] moral state of this island attracted the notice of the Methodist Missionary Society, and they sent out a number of missionaries, chiefly

[illegible] several [illegible] they have [illegible] Methodist [illegible] of which was [illegible] and handsome [illegible]

[illegible] given a brief and general view of the [illegible] of the professedly Christian instruc- [illegible] which the inhabitants of Newfoundland are [illegible] we may proceed to state the effects such means have produced, and what is the present state and condition of public morals.

During the late wars in Spain, the demand for dried fish was such, that Newfoundland rose to a pitch of affluence unexampled at any former period. With this prosperity flowed in a vast foreign population, and an equal flood of vice. In almost every house you might hear music and dancing, the drunkard reeled in the streets, and intemperance and every debauchery were indulged to a most alarming degree. This was the case not only in St. Johns, but all the Out-Harbors drank of the intoxicating cup, so that immorality and profaneness threatened to deluge and destroy all public decorum. The occasion of this unnatural influx of wealth did not last long, but with the return of more moderate success in trade, it is to be lamented that the few good habits cultivated in former times, were not again cheerfully resorted to and cherished. The character and impression given by this spurious prosperity continued, though the immediate causes subsided.

[illegible]
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[illegible]
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[illegible]
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the trade was [illegible]
laborious Hibernians [illegible]
their plantations, [illegible]
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...metimes the stolen
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It will no doubt be [illegible] ornament to a country, and it is the [illegible] warrant of public [illegible]. The [illegible] the pure morals which it teaches, are advantages but very moderately enjoyed in this tract of territory. We have noticed the provision made for the island by the Episcopal church of England, in the appointment of four missionaries. One of these has an establishment at St. Johns, where there is a large and respectable congregation; this missionary is also *acting** chaplain to the garrison, for which he receives some allowance from government in addition to his two salaries from the Society at home, and his congregation at St. Johns church. With all these duties, it cannot be expected that this clergyman can perform much missionary labour beyond the immediate circle in which he is placed. The three other Episcopal missionaries are nearly as much localised as is he at St. Johns; they do the regular duties of their church, for which they receive a salary from their congregation, and beyond this sphere, they attempt very little spiritual labour. We have an opportunity sometimes, of seeing the account these missionaries render of their success to the Society at home —the return states, so many *married*, so many *christened*, so many *buried*; as to the progress of the Protestant religion, the number of sinners reclaimed from the error of their ways, the prospects of piety among the catechumens under their ca[illegible] these come not within

* The real Chaplain has a stipend from Government to the amount of 500l. per annum: but this clerical gentleman has never seen the island, he does his duty by proxy, which proxy he does not pay.

[illegible] as the Soci- [illegible] with [illegible] I cannot [illegible] of the case; did [illegible] it would be sufferable, the evil of it is, they prevent as much as lieth in them [illegible] doing what would be the highest glory of a Christian missionary to perform. They symbolize with the Popish priesthood, they stir up the government to persecute missionaries sent out by the English Dissenters, and they do these things under a pretence of serving the church of England.

It has long been an eye-sore to these clergymen, that Christian ministers of all denominations, have claimed the right to celebrate marriage. More than once there have been attempts made to confine this right to the Episcopal and Popish clergy, and to such of their spiritual assistants as should be warranted by them. The laws relating to the celebration of marriage, between England and her colonies and settlements abroad, stand, or did stand thus: in England, no person, minister or clergyman, can perform the marriage rite, except he be *in Holy orders according to the rites and ceremonies of the English Episcopal church*, and this rite must be performed either by banns or license, and in a consecrated church. By this law, all dissenting ministers, presbyterians and popish priests, are prohibited from performing the marriage rite in *England*. But the Acts of parliament by which this is so clearly stated and commanded, conclude by saying, that these Acts shall not extend to the Jews, nor to the people commonly called Quak

[illegible]

the regulation of this [illegible] to celebrate their marriages [illegible] themselves [illegible] ing to the custom of the [illegible] have belonged; and in cases where no minister could be procured to solemnize the nuptials, magistrates have officiated, and where these have not been at hand, schoolmasters and even any layman have performed the office. These marriages have always, even when legalized at home, been by law officers declared valid and nothing deficient on account of the non presence of a minister of the church of England. Thus it has been in Newfoundland from time immemorial.

It has been observed, that the Episcopal clergy, though so few in numbers and so unequal to the spiritual duties of the whole island, have repeatedly manifested a disposition to prevent other ministers, especially such as are denominated Dissenters, from exercising themselves in the performance of this rite. In the year 1816, a circumstance occured which gave the Episcopacy at St. Johns an opportunity of bringing the matter before the government. A young couple, who had a mind to be joined in the ties of holy wedlock, and that without the consent and knowledge of their friends, applied, under a false name, to the minist[illegible] of the Congregational church for his services in the cel[illegible]ration of the marriage; but as the parties refused to give respectable references, he declined. The same young couple in a day or two,

[illegible] and of [illegible] poverty, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] from Ireland, [illegible] [illegible] in St. Johns; he consented to perform the service and accordingly received their respective signatures in the Register Book, at which time he could not help noticing that the woman wrote her name (which was a feigned one) in a hand very much above her appearance. The next day it came out that this was the same couple which had applied to the minister of the Congregational church, and that they were not what they had professed themselves to be to the Methodist missionary: the man was not a poor working mechanic, but an officer in the army; and the woman not a poor Irish girl of the name of S— C—, but the daughter of a respectable gentleman in the neighborhood, and her name S— C—. Upon the discovery of this clandestine marriage, some persons talked loudly of a prosecution being instituted against the missionary who had celebrated the marriage; but upon a little investigation it was found that a prosecution would fall (according to the laws of England) not upon the deceived minister, but upon the party committing the defraud in writing a *false name*. However, the matter ended not here; it was communicated to the Governor, and in the course of a few days Mr. S. and Mr. C. the two ministers dissenting from the church of England (but not the Catholic priests, though they marry three fourths of the people in the island) were called by letter from the Secretary, to attend at Government House on a given day. This sum

[illegible] and [illegible] preparation. [illegible] men appeared according to [illegible] ernment House assembled, [illegible] attended by his Secretary and the town Magistrates, including the Episcopal missionary, who is generally appointed on the commission of the peace. Before this tribunal, Messrs. S. and C. were politely permitted to take their chairs and sit down to hear a venerable old Admiral of the British navy descant on the elements of law, and on usages civil and ecclesiastical. And it is presumed, that it is an additional proof of the Governor Admiral's intrepidity, in his venturing so far off his own element; but we think it will appear in the issue, that in this experiment, he was a little misled by his ghostly missionary magistrate.

The Governor stated the affair of the late clandestine marriage, and reprobated it as the sad consequence of dissenting ministers pretending to officiate in such cases. He likewise insisted upon it, that all marriages must be solemnized according to the rites and usages of the church of England, and pronounced all marriages not so solemnized to be null and void, and all the offspring of such marriages to be illegitimate. This was a sweeping clause, for there never had been a marriage celebrated in the whole island of Newfoundland, according to the rites and laws of the English church, there were no real canonical places in which to publish banns and to perform marriage service, there were no bishop's courts to grant licenses, nor had there ever been any regard

[illegible] Ex-
[illegible] supposed
to be [illegible] Nor
was this all, the Episcopal missionaries were thereby in-
volved in as much guilt as their dissenting brethren, for
they had, as Mr. R., the Episcopal minister then present
reluctantly acknowledged, solemnized marriage without
any regard to those positive usages adopted in England.
The dissenting ministers contended that as there was no
established church in Newfoundland, there could be no
such thing as *Dissent*, there was no church to conform
to, and no one to dissent from, and that therefore all
clergymen were upon one level in point of law. They
contended also, that the concluding clause in the En-
glish marriage Acts, "Beyond the seas"—the act not
extending to countries *beyond the seas*, gave all his Ma-
jesty's subjects abroad, liberty to solemnize marriage in
any way they might choose. The Governor in opposi-
tion contended, that dissenting churches were not true
churches, and their ministers not authorised ministers;
a true church and a true clergy were only to be found in
the ecclesiastical establishments of Rome and of Eng-
land: that "Beyond seas," meant only out of his Ma-
jesty's dominions, and not any country within the Brit-
ish empire: and therefore did solemnly charge Dis-
senting Ministers, so called, not in future on any pre-
text to solemnize marriage in Newfoundland, and if they
did persist in this breach of good order after this offici[illegible]
notice, *he should be constrained to take from them th*[illegible]

[illegible]
or [illegible]
junction, [illegible]
while they [illegible]
their former practice, as they then did, they should [illegible]
certainly persevere in solemnizing marriage as had been
the practice time immemorial in the island; and that
should they be interrupted in the discharge of their duties,
by any Governor, they were prepared to bring the mat-
ter before a jury in the Court of King's Bench in the
city of London. Thus ended the Government House
conference. In a few days after, the two ministers
drew up a statement of the case, and laid it before the
public, through the medium of the Newfoundland
Mercantile Journal, with their resolutions to resist every
encroachment upon their liberties. In these statements
and resolutions the public opinion seemed generally to
concur. But the Episcopal clergy were determined
upon the subjection of these intruding and presuming
ministers, and accordingly the Governor, (Admiral
Pickmore) upon his return to England, applied to Par-
liament for an Act to regulate these momentous con-
cerns. The case was laid before the King's ministers,
together with the papers written in the Mercantile
Journal, subscribed by Messrs. S. and C. From the
examination of which it appeared to some, high in of-
fice, that all the Newfoundland clergy had an indisputa-
ble right to celebrate marriage according to their re-
spective customs and usage, and that all such mar-
riages were perfectly lawful, others had their doubts;
but Earl Bathurst, we are told, expressed his regret that

[illegible] were very [illegible] that Admiral B. had pledged himself to his Newfoundland clergy, and therefore it was necessary that an Act should be framed explicitly on the subject. After some pro and con the long wished for act came forth in print, a copy of which reached Newfoundland in the fall of the year 1817. It was in the hands of the Dissenters first, and by them published in the Journal. This Parliamentary Instrument set forth *the great inconvenience that had arisen from marriages having been solemnized by persons not duly qualified, and declared it unlawful after the first of January*, 1818, *for any person not in* "HOLY ORDERS" *to celebrate marriage, except in cases wherein persons in* "HOLY ORDERS" *are not to be obtained;* and then—What?—why nothing. Those people who were not within the reach of a minister in *holy orders*, might be married by the magistrates, or by the planters, or by the schoolmasters, or by themselves; by any body, or no body, or they might remain unmarried for all the Act says on the subject.

Upon a perusal of this Act, a question or two naturally arises; i. e. who *are* and who *are not* in "Holy Orders?" Clergymen of the church of England undoubtedly are: and are not priests of the church of Rome? and are not Presbyterian clergymen? and are not all those ministers who have been ordained and solemnly set apart to sacred duties by pastors of churches of their own faith and order? It is no uncommon thing in Acts of Parliament imposing civil duties on persons in general, to exempt the clergy thus: "*Nothing in te*

[illegible] orders, or to any minister or member of a Dissenting congregation in holy orders or pretended holy orders, or to any popish priest in holy orders or pretended holy orders, officiating in any place or congregation recognized by law."*

From hence it might appear very plain to many persons, that there could be no doubt but that the New Act confirmed the right of celebrating marriage to all spiritual characters and that it only excluded laymen. This appears natural. But ministers in Newfoundland, dissenting from the church of England, well knew that the Act was procured designedly for their exclusion, and therefore, that the term "*holy orders*" was intended to set forth only such as were *Episcopally ordained*, and that this was the impression intended to be made upon the public mind. However unnatural and ungenerous and even unjust, such a sentiment might appear to be, yet the intention of the Act on the one hand, and the impression made by it on the other, induced the dissenting clergy not to continue the assertion of their rights, until there might be an opportunity of representing the whole matter to the British Legislature, in order to the obtaining a more explicit Act on the case. For there is no doubt, but that His Majesty's Ministers were grossly deceived by the representation made by Admiral Pickmore.

* In this part of the world I have not access to the British Statute Book, so that I cannot give the reader, date and chapter and section, which I could do were those volumes before me.

[illegible] *of a Dissenting* [illegible] *holy orders, or to* [illegible] *or pretended holy or-* [illegible] *congregation recognized*

[illegible] ry plain to many per- [illegible] oubt but that the New [illegible] rating marriage to all [illegible] nly excluded laymen. [illegible] ters in Newfoundland, [illegible] gland, well knew that [illegible] or their exclusion, and [illegible] *ders*" was intended to [illegible] *scopally ordained*, and [illegible] ded to be made upon [illegible] tural and ungenerous [illegible] t might appear to be, [illegible] one hand, and the im- [illegible] nduced the dissenting [illegible] of their rights, until [illegible] epresenting the whole [illegible] n order to the obtain- [illegible] se. For there is no [illegible] nisters were grossly [illegible] de by Admiral Pick-

[illegible] t access to the British [illegible] eader, date and chapter [illegible] volumes before me.

[illegible] , and [illegible] , which it is [illegible] It is the effect this Act was de- [illegible] Catholic clergy. This Act was [illegible] the popish priests with the cler- gy of the English church, and to place His Majesty's Protestant Dissenting subjects, in a religious light, be- low the Catholics. Whether this is congenial with the character of the British constitution, or whether Pro- testant Dissenters have merited such treatment, the read- er will judge. But the fact* is, that Admiral Pickmore, before he made application for the Act, assured the Catholic clergy that it should not operate against them, it was only designed to shut out the Dissenters and Methodists. This circumstance is confirmed as a fact, from the omission of the Catholic priests at the Govern- ment House conference. If it had been the wish and intention of the Governor to confine the celebration of marriage to the Episcopal clergy, it is natural to expect that the priests would have been called up on that occa sion, and included in the charge delivered to those min- isters who were present. Upon the whole, it is eviden that the Newfoundland government intended to infringe upon the legitimate rights of His Majesty's Protestant Dissenting subjects in the island, and that this effect produced to a degree disgraceful to the contrivers [illegible] abettors of such a plot, and to the great detriment [illegible] the Protestant religion; a brief statement of facts w show.

* So the Catholics of St. Johns say.

[illegible] Hence the [illegible] governors,* and others into offices [illegible] of a Protestant church—the [illegible] which the papists lie in England to the present day, &c. &c. Upon this principle, and [illegible] native Christian principles too, no doubt the Society for propagating the Gospel has sent out four Protestant clergymen to Newfoundland. Upon these principles the Methodist Missionary Society have sent out eleven of their missionaries, with a commission to preach and disseminate the faith of Christ in every part of the island where they shall find an opportunity. In prosecuting these duties, they encounter great difficulties, they perform great labours, they endure great hardships and privations, they make great sacrifices and expose themselves to many dangers; their labours are attended with but little honor from men; the society with which they mingle is often not such as would induce men of their former habits to continue in the work, as they do, for years together. In pursuing these duties, they do not stipulate with the

* It has [illegible] from heretofore to administer the oaths against Po[illegible] the Governor coming into office, in public; this practice has somewhat offended the Catholics, and many Protestants have expressed a wish that it could be dispensed with. This dispensation with the two last Governors has been admitted, but had it been admitted [illegible], it would have appeared under less suspicious circumst[illegible]ces; as things are now in Newfoundland, it gives the papists occasion to triumph over some of His Majesty's best friends.

[illegible] in support, [illegible] as [illegible] [illegible] continue instant in season and out of season.

These men I should consider are very proper assistants to the few Episcopal missionaries stationed in several parts of the island, for it cannot be supposed that four ministers can preach and administer the ordinances of Christianity to 60 or 80,000 souls, scattered along a coast extending from two to three hundred miles. It must appear that these auxiliaries are necessary, when we consider the late increase of popery in the country, and the great increase of priests, who are going about from harbor to harbor, from settlement to settlement, with their mass—their wafers—their holy water—their holy candles and other such trumpery, with the additional blasphemy of extreme unction and absolution.

As to the doctrines these priests teach the people, they have no more real Christianity in them than there is in the doctrines of Boodha. What can a man know of the gospel of Christ from learning the nonsense written in *Butler's Catechism?* or what can a man know of his duty to God and his neighbor from the idolatry and vanity of the mass, or what sort of a Christian can such a man be, who is foolish enough to believe that he receives absolution through the means of another man, who is as great a sinner as himself? And what can be expected from the preponderance of a religion (falsely so called) which the British Government, ever since the Reforma

[illegible]

To [illegible] British [illegible] sionaries; some of [illegible] they find many people who need, [illegible] receive instruction, a people who [illegible] the services of these truly authorized and well recom- mended ministers of the gospel. But these good men have scarcely set their feet on the island, and addressed themselves to their work, before they are called to stand before the Supreme Magistrate and some of the Episco- pal clergy in order to be told "That the ministry they are come to exercise is a *spurious and assumed office*, that the churches to which they belong are *not true churches*; but that the *Popish church is a true church*, and *the Popish clergy is a true and legitimate clergy*; and, moreover, that the Popish church stands upon the same footing as the church of England. They are told also, that they must no longer solemnize marriage, this must be left to the clergy of the church of England and to the priests of Rome."—Well, the Christian mis- sionary flatters himself that he can preach the gospel, and lead men to heaven, without the ghostly privilege of celebrating marriage, but in this respect he is some- what mistaken; however, he goes forth under this im- pression, and proceeds to establish his ministry in one of the remote settlements. Upon his arrival, an honest planter salutes him thus: "Well, Sir, what, you have come to be our minister"—"Yes, my good friend, are you not willing that I should?"—"I suppose, Sir, you

[illegible] Why friend [illegible], and bury your [illegible] gospel to you, and to perform many other offices which a minister of Christ may be expected to do, but as to the office of marriage, I believe we must decline that at present"—"Ah, Sir, I thought so from what the church parson said the other day, when I was over at —— he said that the Methodists would not be let to marry any longer, and he said too, that the Roman clergy was much more fit, and that the new law gave them full license. And I am afraid, Sir, from what he said, that all the people that have been married by you or your folks, are not properly married, and then, you know, the children must be base-born, and this would be a sad thing. But, Sir, do you know that Father O Gorman was along yesterday this way, and he married five or six couple, and took away in his pocket as much as forty or fifty dollars, for you know that a man that does his work well ought to be well paid; and I am sure I had rather pay *well* to be *well* married, than run a hazard, though you so often marry for nothing; yes, Sir, and he too christened a good many children, and forgive some sick people their sins, and promised to pray for their souls if they should die, and I reckon he got something for that too, for our folks seemed mighty well pleased; and he promised to call again soon, and I dare say he will; and so, Sir, I do not think that we shall come much to your meeting, though I used to like to hear your preachers when I lived over the Bay, and I think every body would be glad to see you now if you had but power to marry."

The reader, perhaps, may [illegible] ask the [illegible] and he will find it [illegible]. [illegible] sequence of the late marriage Act, and of the [illegible] in which church of England missionaries held the Pop ish clergy is very natural, and what any person of th least discernment might expect.

A statement of the inconveniences and disabilitie arising from these circumstances and particularly operating upon a certain class of Christian ministers would have been, by the dissenting body laid before Parliament, but the dreadful calamities with which Prov idence visited St. Johns in the fall of last year occupie every active mind in some other way and therefor things have remained in statu quo: but it is to be mos earnestly wished and hoped that a true representation o the case will be laid both before the public and the legis lature in order to the obtaining a full redress of griev ances.

It seldom happens that when once oppression ha gained upon the victim of its cupidity that it ceases t tyrannize and to taunt. So in this case, the dissenter being in a measure interdicted by law, they must b held up to the public as a class of society unworthy o that respect due to others. Men of influence and of of fice began boldly to call in question the loyalty and th legal standing of dissenters altogether. It became almos a settled opinion with some that in England they wer unknown and unprotected and that in Newfoundland they ought to be treated as the outcasts of society. Th death of His Excellency the Governor, which took

[illegible] favor-
[illegible] in re-
[illegible] being in
[illegible] of procession
being put into the hands of the [illegible], he noticed
amidst the long catalogue of official men the omission
of the two dissenting ministers, he expostulated, but
without effect—the omission falling under the notice
of some gentlemen who thought they had a right to
speak they remonstrated in strong terms, and one con-
ceived himself justified in writing the following note on
the subject to the gentleman with whom he thought the
omission unhappily originated.

St. Johns, (Newfoundland) 2d March, 1818.

DEAR SIR,

PERHAPS I ought to apologize for obtruding the subject of this letter, which may appear an unnecessary interference; but the earnest desire to prevent every unpleasant public and private feeling which induces me to step forward, will, I trust, shield me from the imputation of officiousness.

I have accidentally been made acquainted with several of the arrangements for the public interment of our late respected Governor, and which I have reason to believe are principally directed by yourself. I am informed that all respectable public characters are invited in your name, to attend the funeral; and that the minister of the Episcopal church, and the Roman Catholic Bishop, occupy a place in the procession, suitable to their rank—but, that the two *Protestant* Dissenting ministers are *entirely neglected*.

A most respectable gentleman in the town and a leading member in the Episcopal church, has remonstrated with the Rev. Mr. G. upon this neglect, alleging that the Protestant dissenting ministers are equally entitled to respect as public characters, with the Roman Catholic priests; the one, being as much recognised by the Constitution of England as the other. Mr. [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] our opinion from the system of our government or the principle of our religion. And how a clergyman could show such a preference, when he has subscribed Articles which condemn the leading doctrines of the church of Rome as "*Blasphemous Fables and Dangerous Deceits*," is to me most astonishing!—According to the laws of Great Britain, the Dissenting and Methodist ministers are in *every respect*, as much recognised in their public functions, as the priests of the Romish church; and to show such a decided partiality for the latter, as appears to have been customary in this place, in many instances as well as in the present, is to oppose both the Law of the Land and the plain dictates of Protestantism.

Referring more immediately to the present case—both the Rev. Mr. S. and the Rev. Mr. C. are gentlemen, and men of education and talents; and they have statedly in their Congregations some of the most respectable people in St. Johns. As loyal British subjects, it is natural to suppose they would wish to pay the last tribute of respect to the late Representative of His Majesty, and the exclusion of them, is both an insult upon their loyalty and their religious profession.—But laying aside all reference to their individual feelings and personal character—they are the ministers of Protestant Congregations, fully equal in respectability, if not in number, to that of the Roman Catholic Bishop; and for a Protestant government to pay a compliment (at the expense of their brethren) to that religion, against which so many legal disabilities actually exist, and which is solemnly abjured by all persons in high office, is both inconsistent and indecent. I have not the least wish to deprive the Roman Catholic priests of that respect which is due to their rank in society. But as a Protestant, I affirm [illegible] not right that Protestants of any denomination, should be insulted (as I maintain they must be on the present occasion) by such gross and public neglect of their ministers. Are they worse members of society than those who attend the Mass.—Are they more immoral or more disloyal?—The *contrary is palpably the fact.*

[illegible] stands in [illegible] number and [illegible] to pay [illegible] But [illegible] in the fact; [illegible] we have [illegible] of our country are ineffectual [illegible] to such mean and unworthy policy.

I [illegible] my opinion on this point freely, with the desire of [illegible] you with my view of the subject, and in the hope that my representation may prevent an oversight which would be [illegible] to the feelings of many respectable people, than to those, of

Dear Sir, Your faithful servant.

These remonstrances had no effect, except it were to fill the minds of a large proportion of the community with regret, and to give the Catholics a ground for great exultation. For it must be known to some, and be remembered by others, that in the procession, alongside the Episcopal clergyman, walked the Popish bishop *in his habits.* Perhaps the parties who made that arrangement, were not aware that there is an Act of parliament *which makes it penal* for any Catholic priest *to appear publicly in the habit of his order*, and *the penalty is disqualification for office in his own communion.* If the writer's memory serves him correctly, the Act is the 32 Geo. III. chap. 32. So that in consequence of this little circumstance intending to add to the humiliation of Dissenters, the Catholic bishop is drawn into a snare, and is liable to be informed against by any one, and brought to justice for having violated a direct law, *by which violation he is liable to be silenced.*

The decided preference which the government of Newfoundland has shown to this class of people

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
frequently call upon the priests to [illegible]
which only belong to the police, that the priests [illegible]
themselves magistrates. The public [illegible]
peace, do officially and in the public papers, with [illegible]
own signatures subscribed, declare the impotence [illegible]
their own arm, and the low condition of their [illegible]
bench, by acknowledging the high obligation they [illegible]
the town are under to priestly authority. So that if [illegible]
can walk the streets in safety or lie down upon our b[illegible]
we must thank the priests—if we apprehend a thief [illegible]
recover our lost or stolen property, we must go cap[illegible]
hand to the priests. Surely this cannot be in any [illegible]
of the British dominions, one would think it must be [illegible]
Italy or in Spain or in Rome. It is no uncomm[illegible]
thing in St. Johns, to see a poor miserable creat[illegible]
drove along the streets by the priest, who is deali[illegible]
dreadful blows by way of chastising the delinquent [illegible]
some crime discovered by the holy father: this *str*[illegible]
castigation is often inflicted upon *females*, in a way [illegible]

* This new Marriage Act has rather increased than remedi[illegible]
the evil. For some time last winter a young couple of respect[illegible]
ble families stole a wedding, the marriage being celebrated [illegible]
a common soldier; and as the Act now stands, let but the pa[illegible]
ties only get out of the parish of a clergyman and they m[illegible]
be married by a chimney sweeper. In January last, a man a[illegible]
woman came over to St. J[illegible]s from Petty Harbor, and we[illegible]
married by the Episcopal min[illegible]ter while the man had a wife li[illegible]
ing at Broad Hempstone in Devonshire, the man's name is Clari[illegible]
and the woman's Mummer.

[illegible] that the prince [illegible] public guardian of the [illegible] public papers, with their [illegible] declare the impotence of [illegible] condition of their own [illegible] high obligation they and [illegible] authority. So that if we [illegible] or lie down upon our beds [illegible] if we apprehend a thief or [illegible] perty, we must go cap in [illegible] this cannot be in any part [illegible] would think it must be in [illegible] me. It is no uncommon [illegible] poor miserable creature [illegible] priest, who is dealing [illegible] stising the delinquent for [illegible] he holy father: this *street* [illegible] pon *females*, in a way not [illegible]

[illegible] ther increased than remedied [illegible] a young couple of respecta- [illegible] arriage being celebrated by [illegible] now stands, let but the par- [illegible] a clergyman and they may [illegible] In January last, a man and [illegible] om Petty Harbor, and were [illegible] while the man had a wife liv- [illegible] ire, the man's name is Clark,

[illegible] ghost- [illegible] should [illegible] of the unmerci- [illegible] it is all for [illegible] unction ap- [illegible] all matters [illegible] of [illegible]

The late dreadful fires have exhibited scenes of iniquity unparalleled in the former history of Newfoundland. How these conflagrations originated, has never been stated. The first, on the night of the 7th November, broke out in the back part of an uninhabited house, in the very thickest part of the town; a Waterford Journal says it was by accident, (as at so great a distance must be well known,) and not by any vile incendiary, as some slanderers on the spot have insinuated. The second fire on the morning of the 21st is thought by many nearly connected, to have been by accident; and not a few would wish it could be proved that both were so. But some little time after these two strange events, the Grand Jury found under a store standing upon piles on the shore a little above high water mark, the remains of a fire, which had burnt out, only charring a little the floor and joist over head; the store, it was found, had contained some moist substance on that spot, and had thereby made the floor damp, by which means, and the hand of a kind Providence, the fire went out and left only the brands to say a fire had been there. Now *this*, I presume, was *not by accident*.

[illegible]
or [illegible]
poor [illegible]
the [illegible]
owners, this was a scene [illegible]
ages committed by the fire. [illegible]
were much on the alert, and called [illegible]
people to assist in extinguishing the flames, but to [illegible]
effect. And they exerted themselves much [illegible]
to recover the plundered property, and a great deal [illegible]
valuables were regained by their means; they searched [illegible]
suspected houses, they thundered and anathematized [illegible]
from the altar, they drew out much at confession, and
thus a great deal of stolen property came back into the
hands of the persons to whom it belonged. But what
sort of a religion must this be, that a large proportion of
the congregations are thieves, so addicted to thieving
that the priests must in the exercise of discipline be-
come police officers and knights of the cat-o-nine tails!
Ministers of other congregations, have never found it
necessary to be thus employed; they may, and it is very
likely they have, persons in their churches of light and
vicious characters, but then they are not found in such
abundance as to render it necessary to disgrace the clerg-
ical character as Popish priests are disgraced. No
Christian pastors would be seen at the head of such a
rabble as meet at the chapel, much less would they ad-
minister the sacramental privileges to them, as is done
there statedly and without scruple.

This is the piety, and this is the moral influence pro-
duced, by what is profanely called the Holy Roman

[illegible]

[illegible] of these pages, by no means wishes that the denomination to which he belongs, should have granted to them any favor, or be put in possession of any rights not possessed equally by all and every other denomination. *Universal liberty of conscience is the fundamental law of Protestant Dissenters.* They claim only what they would grant. Let them only but possess this liberty unshackled, and they will succeed in propagating their sentiments, just in proportion as those sentiments include interesting and important truths; if the principles they inculcate be not according to the Spirit of truth, no legal establishment would make them so; and if they be, no legal disabilities will make them error.

Thus have we taken a hasty and brief view of the moral state and character of Newfoundland: this very thing was undertaken once before while the writer resided in the island, he intended then to have exhibited this subject in his appendix to the Sermon preached and published in *Commemoration of the Benevolence of the Citizens of Boston, who sent down after the dreadful fires a gratuitous supply of bread and flour for the distressed sufferers*; but was prevented by the impossibility of getting the statement printed, as may be seen by a reference to that appendix, page vii.* The printer found from the nature of the matter to be published, that it

* A few copies of this Sermon remain unsold, and may be had on application to the Author, or to Mr. Samuel T. Armstrong.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

It would [illegible]

ed in his [illegible]

was no [illegible] where a [illegible]

awed and [illegible] and a

subtle priesthood, [illegible]

secret or open enemies. And here I feel [illegible]

upon thus publicly to acknowledge the great obligation I am under to that gentleman, the King's Printer, for the many civilities I have received in his office, and indeed to other gentlemen of the same profession. Nor would I fail to recall the pleasing remembrance of that respect shown to me and my family during two years residence, from all ranks of the community with whom I had the honor to be associated. I can distinguish between *men* and *men in office*.

Neither must I omit to apologize to the Methodist missionaries, for the liberties I took with their office and qualification in the former publication—I hope they and their friends never did otherwise than perceive that the light and free style adopted in relation to them, was never intended to reflect on their talents either natural or acquired. I am growingly persuaded that a sense of duty and an application to it, discover true greatness of mind, and that a diligent search after knowledge is true learning—a diligent, resolute application to the means of improvement is the certain and only way to accomplish great things, as

> "Gutta cavat lapidem non vi; sed saepe cadendo
> Sic homo fit doctus non vi; sed saepe legendo."

FINIS.

[illegible]

[illegible] great obligation
[illegible]ing's Printer, for
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